



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

June 2, 2022

The Honorable Mike H. Morath  
Commissioner  
Texas Education Agency  
1701 North Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Dear Commissioner Morath:

After the horrific shooting at Santa Fe High School, I made school safety an emergency item during the 2019 legislative session. The Texas Legislature responded by passing Senate Bill 11 to make schools safer for students and teachers. Sadly, tragedy struck Texas again last week with the senseless shooting that occurred at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.

In the wake of this devastating crime, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that our schools provide a safe and secure environment for the children of Texas. Senate Bill 11 requires you to adopt rules to ensure that building standards for school district facilities are safe and secure. Additionally, you are required to review and amend any such rules by September 1, 2022, to ensure that school building standards provide a secure and safe environment for children, teachers, and staff.

You have adopted rules that impose standards that school districts must follow when building new facilities after November 1, 2021, to ensure they are safe and secure, but there is still more work to be done. You should immediately prepare additional rules to ensure that existing school facilities are also held to heightened safety standards. Your task is to provide ways to make schools safer.

Additionally, I direct you to determine the cost for school districts to comply with these heightened safety standards for existing facilities. The Office of the Governor and the Texas Legislature need this critical information to determine the best ways to secure our schools and how to properly allocate funding.

In addition, you must instruct school districts to identify actions they can take prior to the start of the new school year that will make their campuses more secure. You should also instruct all school districts to conduct weekly inspections of exterior doors to verify they are secure during school hours. Finally, you should develop strategies to encourage school districts to increase the presence of trained law enforcement officers and school marshals on campuses.

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Thank you for your hard work on this important issue. We must do everything possible to protect children and safeguard our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott  
Governor

GA:acd